

1 NYS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

2 BOARD OF PAROLE

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4 PAROLE BOARD INTERVIEW

5 In the Matter of

6 CHAPMAN, MARK D.

7 DIN NUMBER 81A3860

8 NYSID NUMBER 4651382Z

9 \*\*\*\*\*

10 TYPE OF INTERVIEW: Reappearance

11 LOCATION: Wende Correctional Facility

12 Videoconferenced from the Rochester Parole Office

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17 DATE: Wednesday, August 22nd, 2012

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19 BEFORE: COMMISSIONER MARC A. COPPOLA  
20 COMMISSIONER JOSEPH P. CRANGLE  
COMMISSIONER SALLY A. THOMPSON

21 ALSO PRESENT: KAREN ADRIAN, APA  
22 KAREN CROWLEY, DSP

23 HEARING REPORTER: Megan E. Pelka

24

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1 EXAMINATION BY COMMISSIONER THOMPSON:

2 Q Good afternoon. Mark Chapman?

3 A Good afternoon.

4 Q I'm Commissioner Thompson. Also on the panel with me  
5 today are Commissioners Coppola and Crangle.

6 COMMISSIONER CRANGLE: How are you doing?

7 COMMISSIONER COPPOLA: Hello.

8 INMATE: Hello. Fine, sir.

9 BY COMMISSIONER THOMPSON:

10 Q Okay. You're here today for a reappearance?

11 A Yes, ma'am.

12 Q Crime of conviction, murder second, serving a 20 to life  
13 year sentence, and that's by plea; is that correct, sir?

14 A Yes, ma'am.

15 Q Okay. The instant offense involved you waiting in front  
16 of the victim's residence and shooting the victim  
17 several times, causing his death. The victim was with  
18 his wife. Do you want to say anything about the instant  
19 offense, sir?

20 A Yes, ma'am.

21 Q Okay.

22 A It was a very selfish act and I deeply regret it. I'm  
23 sorry for my crime.

24 Q All right. And how long were you at this location and  
25 how long were you stalking this location, awaiting the

1 victim?

2 A I learned of the location in Hawaii through a book, so  
3 that's when it started. And then, twice I flew to  
4 New York, so I knew right where he lived. On that  
5 particular day, I was there all day from early morning.

6 Q And when you say early morning, approximately what time  
7 was you say you arrived?

8 A Before noon.

9 Q Okay. And this happened a little before 11 p.m. at  
10 night, correct?

11 A Yes, ma'am.

12 Q All right. And you said that you decided to target this  
13 victim while you were in Hawaii?

14 A Yes, ma'am.

15 Q How long before the actual instant offense?

16 A About three months. I believe it was October.

17 Q And why did you target this victim?

18 A Because he was very famous.

19 Q And what did you want to get out of it?

20 A Attention, bottom line.

21 Q All right. So, you planned to cause the death of this  
22 victim?

23 A Yes, I did.

24 Q And when did you obtain the gun?

25 A I don't remember the month or the week, but it was

1           shortly after. At that time, guns were easily purchased  
2           without a whole lot of background check.

3    Q       Were --

4    A       Excuse me.

5    Q       Okay. You said without a background check?

6    A       Back then, yes. You could -- if you didn't have a  
7           felony record, you could get one with a driver's  
8           license.

9    Q       Okay. And where did you obtain the gun?

10   A       A gun store in Honolulu. I don't remember the name of  
11           it.

12   Q       And how about the bullets?

13   A       The bullets I got in Atlanta, Georgia when I flew from  
14           New York to Atlanta to see an old friend who was a  
15           police officer and I told him I needed the bullets  
16           because I couldn't get them in New York. I made a phone  
17           call in New York and the fellow said, you're not going  
18           to get any bullets out of me. It's just not done here.  
19           So, I flew down to Atlanta and got the bullets from him.  
20           Told him that I needed the weapon for protection in  
21           New York. I didn't tell him what I was going to do, and  
22           then flew back up to New York.

23   Q       All right. And why did you choose hollow point?

24   A       Because they were more deadly.

25   Q       All right. So, you knowingly wanted to inflict death to

1           this victim, John Lennon, correct?

2     A     Yes. Absolutely.

3     Q     All right. So, you waited for him all day with this  
4           weapon and when he arrived with his wife, what happened?

5     A     Mrs. Lennon was -- she came out of the car first and she  
6           went a little ahead of him, maybe 30 feet. I don't know  
7           if he was talking to the driver or what. And then he  
8           came out and she had already gone into the alcove of the  
9           building. And then when Mr. Lennon passed me I turned,  
10          pulled out my weapon and shot him in the back.

11    Q     And how many times did you shoot him?

12    A     I emptied the revolver, five bullets.

13    Q     Did you call his name, did you say anything to him prior  
14          to shooting him?

15    A     I've read in the record all through, since that time,  
16          that I said, "Mr. Lennon", but I did not say that. I  
17          just shot him. It was just me and him in the archway of  
18          the Dakota and I knew who he was. I met him earlier  
19          that day and I just shot him then.

20    Q     And what happened when you met him earlier that day?

21    A     He was very kind to me. Ironically, very kind and was  
22          very patient with me. The limousine was waiting, his  
23          wife was waiting in the limousine, and he took his time  
24          with me and he got the pen going and he signed my album.  
25          He asked me if I needed anything else. I said, no. No,

1       sir and he walked away. Very cordial and very decent  
2       man.

3       Q     And even after that encounter, you still waited for him  
4       to cause his death?

5       A     Yes. There was an inner struggle for a while there, you  
6       know, what am I doing here, leave now. It wasn't all  
7       totally cold-blooded, but most of it was. I did try to  
8       tell myself to leave. I've got the album, take it home,  
9       show my wife, everything will be fine. But I was so  
10      compelled to commit that murder that nothing would have  
11      dragged me away from that building.

12      Q     All right. And then what happened after you shot  
13      Mr. Lennon?

14      A     There was a scream. I still don't know who made that  
15      scream, but there was a scream. There was some  
16      commotion. I stood there with the gun in my hand, and  
17      the doorman, Jose, whom I'd met earlier and talked to at  
18      length, he was crying and he asked me to leave, please  
19      leave. I think he was in shock. And he grabbed my  
20      pistol with both of his hands and shook it out of my  
21      hand onto the ground and then kicked it about 20 feet  
22      away. And he was very frightened and crying. And I  
23      began to pace back and forth under the archway.

24      Q     Okay. And when the police arrived, where were you?

25      A     Still in the archway. I put my hands on top of my head

1 and Officer Spiro came and put me against the wall and  
2 patted me down. I told him it was -- he was worried  
3 about other people being involved and I told him it was  
4 just me and he handcuffed me and arrested me.

5 Q Did you remove any of your clothing, your coat?

6 A Yes, I believe my hat, so I could put my hands on top of  
7 my head and yes, ma'am, my coat. I believe I removed my  
8 coat.

9 Q And why was that?

10 A I don't remember. I just took my coat off.

11 Q You also had some reading material?

12 A Yes, ma'am. I had a paperback novel, J.D. Salinger's  
13 "The Catcher in the Rye", that I brought with me.

14 Q Okay. All right. All right. Since your last  
15 appearance, you've remained in protective custody,  
16 correct?

17 A I believe it's called involuntarily protective custody.  
18 I'm not -- there's two, there's protective custody and  
19 there's involuntarily protective custody. I'm in  
20 involuntarily.

21 Q Involuntarily protective custody. Yes, I stand  
22 corrected. All right. What have you been doing since  
23 you've been at this facility?

24 A I've been in my cell, basically, writing letters,  
25 reading, thinking.

1 Q All right. And when you were in Attica, you were an  
2 administrative clerk?

3 A I was a law library clerk. I did all kinds of things in  
4 the box there. I prepared sheet up, swept and mopped,  
5 porter duties and the law library.

6 Q All right. And the paperback book that you had, "The  
7 Catcher in the Rye," was there any significance to why  
8 you had that --

9 A At that --

10 Q Go on.

11 A At that time, there was a great significance. I  
12 identified with the book. I identified with the  
13 character, who seemed to be lost and troubled. And in  
14 my state of mind at that time, I kind of felt I kind of  
15 was him. And so, that book was like saying, this is me  
16 and I wanted people to read it and it was a confusing  
17 time for me.

18 Q You said you did this for the attention and notoriety?

19 A Yes, ma'am.

20 Q Do you feel you received that?

21 A Yes, ma'am.

22 Q And how do you feel about that today?

23 A Absolutely was not worth it. Absolutely ridiculously  
24 selfish act to take another human life so that I could  
25 be pumped up into, you know, something that I wasn't to



1           begin with. I deeply regret it.

2   Q       All right. You have not incurred any disciplinary  
3           infractions since your last appearance. Upon release,  
4           where are you going to reside, sir?

5   A       I didn't understand you, ma'am.

6   Q       Where are you going to reside?

7   A       There's a fellow in Medina, New York and he's a minister  
8           and he's an older fellow and he has a lot of contacts in  
9           the area and he has agreed to refurbish his upstairs  
10          apartment for me and offered me two jobs.

11   Q       Okay. And what's his name and how did you meet him?

12   A       His name is [REDACTED]. My wife met him several years  
13          ago at a church function and she was really impressed by  
14          his deep commitment to Christ. She said, Mark, you got  
15          to meet this guy. And I usually don't meet people very  
16          often like that. So, we corresponded and I just met him  
17          the first time Monday where he offered me two jobs and  
18          told me some other information that my parole officer  
19          wanted to know about.

20   Q       All right. So, you just met him this Monday?

21   A       Yes, ma'am.

22   Q       Okay. And you already proposed to reside with him even  
23          before you met him?

24   A       Yes, ma'am.

25   Q       And that was basically because of what your wife had

1 told you that this would be --

2 A Yes and our correspondence. And I know a lady who knows  
3 him, known for years and said that -- she just said the  
4 other day when I was on the phone with her, she said,  
5 there's no better man than Stan Thurber. So, his  
6 reputation being an officer in his well-known church  
7 group, I didn't have a problem with that at all.

8 Q All right. And how about employment?

9 A The first job he offered me was -- he has nine acres in  
10 the back of his house and he had said that the forestry  
11 commission wants his ash trees cut down because they  
12 have a disease. I guess they're spreading all over the  
13 area. And he said, Mark, the first thing I'll put you  
14 to work on is cutting all those tress down and he also  
15 has a job -- he's still a very hardy man. His mind is  
16 great for his age and he has a full-time job at a farm  
17 and he said, I could get you a job there very easily.  
18 There would be no problem with that, he told me.

19 Q Okay. All right. And we do have numerous letters of  
20 support. You also have the support of your wife, you  
21 said, correct?

22 A Yes, ma'am, 33 years.

23 Q And you now have conjugal visits, correct?

24 A Yes, ma'am, for 20 years.

25 Q And that was on and off, the conjugal visits? They

- 1 stopped for a while or it's been for 20 years?
- 2 A Twenty years pretty steady. There may have been a year  
3 or two we missed, but she would come up pretty steady  
4 and we would probably have 30, 35 visits.
- 5 Q All right. And where does she reside?
- 6 A In Hawaii.
- 7 Q And she does come up to visit you?
- 8 A Yes.
- 9 Q How often?
- 10 A She couldn't make it last year, but she was here in  
11 December of 2010 and she will be able to come this year,  
12 probably for an FRP visit.
- 13 Q Okay. And how is [REDACTED]?
- 14 A Great. I haven't [REDACTED].
- 15 Q But you did at one point, correct?
- 16 A Yes, I would say so. Maybe not to [REDACTED]  
17 [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]  
18 [REDACTED] that type of  
19 thing, drinking.
- 20 Q Any other drugs?
- 21 A Drugs back when I was a teenager, none since then.
- 22 Q And what drugs did you use back then?
- 23 A Marijuana, LSD, little bit of pills.
- 24 Q What type of pills?
- 25 A Well, what was called speed back then, what was called

1 downers back then, depressants.

2 Q All right. And was that during the time you committed  
3 the instant offense?

4 A No, no, nothing. Just had one beer that day earlier at  
5 lunch. That's it.

6 Q All right. We also have your sentencing minutes on file  
7 and that was before the Honorable Dennis Edwards?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And during sentencing, do you recall the Court stating  
10 that you stated, in your own language, "I intended to  
11 kill John Lennon and that night, I drew a pistol from my  
12 pocket, proceeding to shoot him with intent to kill  
13 him". And you were asked, "what was the reason for  
14 using the hollow-point bullets?" And you stated, "to  
15 ensure John Lennon's death"?

16 A Yes, ma'am.

17 Q It was also stated, "it was an intentional crime, it was  
18 a crime contemplated, planned and executed by an  
19 individual fully aware of the situation and consequences  
20 of his conduct."

21 A Yes.

22 Q All right. As stated, we have numerous letters of  
23 support. We also have numerous letters in opposition.  
24 We also have your COMPAS re-entry risk assessment. Do  
25 you recall filling out a questionnaire?

1 A I recall being asked the questions.

2 Q All right. And that was numerous questions?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And, based on that, your overall risk is low.

5 COMMISSIONER THOMPSON: Any other questions?

6 COMMISSIONER CRANGLE: Yes, I have a couple.

7 EXAMINATION BY COMMISSIONER CRANGLE:

8 Q Prior to this happening, you were working as a security  
9 officer?

10 A Security guard, yes, sir.

11 Q Okay. Up until when?

12 A I would say several months before the crime.

13 Q Okay. And were you [REDACTED] when you were in  
14 Hawaii?

15 A No.

16 Q No?

17 A No. Not at that time, no.

18 Q Were you hearing voices at all?

19 A Not audible.

20 Q Okay. And what does your wife -- is your wife retired?

21 A No, she still works.

22 Q Okay. And you've had numerous interviews with the  
23 Parole Board and even with the media over the years,  
24 correct?

25 A Two interviews with the media in 30 years.

1 Q Okay. And what's your feeling about all this now? I  
2 mean, you've said that you wanted to be somebody, right?

3 A Yes, sir.

4 Q And then you found out -- or, in your opinion, murderers  
5 aren't somebodies, they're nobodies. Did you say that  
6 one time?

7 A I said I was a nobody. I don't believe every --

8 Q What about -- how do you feel about yourself now?

9 A Because of my years, I was thinking about this and my  
10 age, it's 57, I've come to the conclusion what happened  
11 was a very horrible thing. It did not need to be done.  
12 It was done for extremely selfish reasons that I regret  
13 that to this day. I personally can't think of anything  
14 more selfish to do, take somebody's life for your own  
15 aggrandizement and there were a lot of people in pain  
16 then and people that still want to know what happened  
17 now. That's why I'm sitting before you.

18 Q People are still in pain, right?

19 A They're still in pain, sir. I get letters all the time.

20 Q Are you in pain still?

21 A That's a great question, sir. I wouldn't say as much  
22 pain. I would say that the pain I have now is trying to  
23 stay as close as I can to what I think is right and that  
24 is to stay as close as I can to God. So any pain I  
25 have, I try to give it to Him and He takes care of it

1       for me. I'm looking forward, not to the streets, but  
2       I'm looking forward to my future of helping others find  
3       Christ. That's what I'm interested in now and have been  
4       for a long time.

5    Q    So, you have deep faith now?

6    A    I have a deep relationship with Christ.

7    Q    How was it -- how your faith, you know, your  
8       relationship prior to the shooting, to the murder?

9    A    Zero. Zero. In fact, before the crime, I know beyond  
10       any doubt that the Lord told my heart twice, I believe  
11       in my heart, don't do this. He did not obviously want  
12       this done to one of His human beings and I ignored Him  
13       twice and ended up getting what I deserve.

14   Q    Okay. And so, you found God while in prison?

15   A    Actually, when I was 16 at a camp, at a Christian camp,  
16       I saw a film that you could actually know Christ and  
17       before that, I didn't know that. I just thought it was  
18       a character in a Bible and he was up there on a throne  
19       somewhere and didn't have much to do with us. So at  
20       that camp and shortly after, I met Him, found out that  
21       He's real and He could be known and He could forgive  
22       people and I felt forgiven and I walked with Him for a  
23       number of years and told other people about Him. So  
24       this is obviously very embarrassing for me now, having  
25       committed murder, but I knew He was real and I knew He

1        was there at any time and what I did was I drifted from  
2        Him, sir, for a few years and [REDACTED]  
3        and became boxed in such a hole that at that time, at  
4        that age, I thought the only way out was pop out, like a  
5        jack-in-the-box and be famous. I had to evolve with my  
6        mouth, I went that way and then this way was the way I  
7        chose and it was a very bad decision, obviously.

8        Q        So, instead of doing something positive to make you  
9        famous --

10      A        That's right.

11      Q        -- you chose the negative?

12      A        Extreme, extreme negative.

13      Q        Which is murder?

14      A        Yes.

15      Q        How many times did you read that book, "The Catcher in  
16        the Rye"?

17      A        Probably -- I read it in high school. A friend had  
18        given it to me and said, you got to read this and then I  
19        forgot about it. But then around the time of the crime,  
20        I picked it up again and I would say I read it three,  
21        four, five times.

22      Q        Were you reading it while you were waiting for  
23        Mr. Lennon to come back to his apartment?

24      A        I wasn't reading it before, but I read it after. I  
25        opened the book and I started reading it after.



1 Q Okay. I thought I read somewhere, not in your file, but  
2 over the years, that when you -- your last shift at the  
3 security office, did you sign your name as John Lennon?

4 A Yes, I did.

5 Q Why did you do that?

6 A I remember that distinctly. It was kind of a way of  
7 saying -- it was kind of a warning. I didn't think I  
8 was John Lennon.

9 Q This happened in October or when, because --

10 A I believe so, a few months before the crime at the  
11 security desk. Actually, at that time I wasn't a  
12 security guard. I didn't want that. I became a  
13 maintenance man. The same thing, I was there, I signed  
14 the book and I signed it as just like sending up a flag,  
15 I guess would be the best way to understand it. It  
16 wasn't a help-me flag. I wish it was, but it wasn't.  
17 It was just like a, hey, this is going to happen.

18 Q Okay.

19 A Like my way of telling someone, I guess.

20 Q Why did you quit the job? Were you planning on -- what  
21 your goal was, is to commit the murder, so you quit the  
22 job to go do it or what?

23 A I don't remember that quite distinctly, but that sounds  
24 probably what happened. I'd have to think about that  
25 for a little bit exactly why I quit the job.

1 COMMISSIONER CRANGLE: All right. Thank you.

2 INMATE: Thank you.

3 EXAMINATION BY COMMISSIONER COPPOLA:

4 Q Mr. Chapman, you had said a little -- a few minutes ago  
5 that it wasn't worth it. Why?

6 A Fame is ridiculous. It holds no value. A lot of people  
7 will tell you that, especially as they get older. To do  
8 something like that against another person, it's  
9 something that would keep me alive and boost me. That's  
10 ludicrous and I'm actually glad that that's not done  
11 more. I thought maybe more people would do that and I'm  
12 glad that they have not. I'm surprised that they have  
13 not because this society is just geared toward celebrity  
14 like crazy. And as the years passed, you know, people  
15 that were famous in the 20's or 30's, people don't know  
16 even know their names now. So it's such a fleeting,  
17 ridiculous thing.

18 Q So, the gaining of fame wasn't worth it, but what about  
19 taking of another's life just to gain that fame? What  
20 weight does that bear on you?

21 A Tremendous weight. I believe when I answered the first  
22 question, that's what I was generally meaning, it wasn't  
23 worth it. I mean --

24 Q Okay. What did you think was going to happen? What  
25 kind of notoriety did you think you were going to get by

1           doing this?

2     A     Tremendous notoriety.

3     Q     Positive notoriety?

4     A     No, sir. Not positive, but tremendous notoriety.

5     Q     So, negative?

6     A     It's all I seemed to want at that time. It was my way  
7           out. It was, you know, if you go through the years and  
8           your self-worth and it just keeps getting smashed in and  
9           you feel like you're an inch tall and you try to find a  
10          way out of it and I did. And I tried hard sometimes to  
11          improve myself. But then when it just didn't change and  
12          I didn't have the common sense and the intelligence back  
13          then to tell somebody and to grab onto them and say, I'm  
14          in trouble here and I'm fixing to do this and you got to  
15          help me. I didn't -- I guess back then, particularly  
16          males, just didn't do that. Nowadays, you feel more  
17          prayers and say hey, I've got a problem here, help me.  
18          I didn't think that way at all.

19    Q     So, fast-forwarding now into the future, into the  
20           present, I mean and as you stated, you understand that  
21           there are many people still hurting over what you did?

22    A     A lot of people.

23    Q     What do you think would happen -- what do you think  
24           would be -- what do you think your life would be like if  
25           you were to be released out into the community? What

1       would you think that would be like, with all the  
2       attention that has been gained over the crime that you  
3       committed?

4     A     I believe that at first, there would be a lot of  
5       attention on me and perhaps some people would think very  
6       negatively of me.

7     Q     Do you think anybody would attempt to take your life?

8     A     I don't know. I thought about that. Anybody that would  
9       do that in the name of John Lennon would be doing  
10       exactly the opposite of something that he would want  
11       them to do.

12    Q     What if they just wanted to gain notoriety like you did?

13    A     Good question. Very good question. That's why I'm in a  
14       protected situation here, for the same reason.

15    Q     So, you would agree that it's reasonable to believe that  
16       somebody who would want to gain notoriety for attempting  
17       or killing the person who killed John Lennon might do  
18       the same exact thing to get notoriety?

19    A     Yes, sir. It would be very reasonable.

20    Q     And they would assume that they would get positive  
21       notoriety, whereas you knew that you would get negative  
22       notoriety?

23    A     They might be doing it just for the reason I did it,  
24       just to feel some self worth. They may not even think  
25       about negative or positive. They may think well, you

1 know, here's my chance to feel something, to feel worth  
2 something and these are all wrong decisions. People  
3 make them every day to try to find --

4 Q But you definitely agree that that's reasonable to  
5 believe that somebody might try to do that?

6 A Absolutely.

7 Q Because of now your notoriety?

8 A Yes, sir.

9 Q Okay. I'm not sure if it was already asked, but prior  
10 to choosing your victim and from what you described, it  
11 seems like you were very calculating and you spent time  
12 and expense to put this all together?

13 A Yes, sir.

14 Q Did you consider anybody else?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Who else did you consider?

17 A I had a list; Johnny Carson, who has now passed on;  
18 George C. Scott, who was an actor. I actually went to  
19 see him at a Broadway play. I was in the front row. I  
20 thought about shooting him.

21 Q What you're saying, it wasn't anything personal against  
22 John Lennon, it was just simply about you and gaining  
23 notoriety?

24 A Absolutely true. Nothing personal. In the beginning,  
25 when I got the book that I mentioned to the Commissioner

1       beside you and found out where he was, there was some  
2       anger. The Dakota at that time, to me, seemed opulent  
3       and here was a singer -- bear in mind, this is my  
4       thinking at that time as a 25-year old man, a confused  
5       man -- here's a singer that's singing of certain things  
6       and yet, living in this opulence. And here I was in a  
7       very desperate, dark place and I got angry. I got  
8       jealous, angry and I guess I needed a way to get those  
9       emotions out. When people do that to other people, it's  
10      all about them. It's nothing really about what's  
11      happening outside them. They want to express --  
12      something's got to come out somehow. So, I was angry at  
13      first. But on the night of the crime and before that,  
14      way before that, there was no anger, simply because he  
15      the most famous person I knew of. It had nothing to do  
16      with being a Beatles' fan when I was very, very young or  
17      anything like that at all.

18    Q     Okay.

19    A     And I would like -- if I could say this -- I would like  
20       Mrs. Lennon to really know that. I think it would help  
21       somewhat that it wasn't anger. It wasn't anything  
22       against her husband as a person, only as a famous  
23       person. If he was less famous than three or four other  
24       people on the list, he would not have been shot. And  
25       that's the truth.

1           COMMISSIONER COPPOLA: Okay. Thank you for your  
2 candidness.

3 By COMMISSIONER THOMPSON:

4 Q How long was this list?

5 A I would say six or seven people.

6 Q And they were all just -- did they range in variety of  
7 what they were famous for?

8 A It didn't matter. There was quite a variety. They were  
9 all very famous.

10 Q And John Lennon happened to be top on your list?

11 A The top on the list.

12 Q All right. It's ironic that not only was he an  
13 international music star, but he also was a peace  
14 advocate at that time, correct? He professed peace and  
15 to die such a violent death?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Did you share this plan with anyone, this cold,  
18 calculated plan? Did you -- thought about it for months  
19 and carefully planned to execute?

20 A Nobody else, except the first trip when I came to  
21 New York to do this and I saw a film called "Ordinary  
22 People" and it changed my mind and I called my wife  
23 right away from the motel -- or from the movie lobby and  
24 I said, I'm coming home and I was crying and I said I  
25 can't -- you know, I whispered on the phone what I was

1 planning to do. And she said, Mark, don't, right away.  
2 And I flew home and met her at the door of our apartment  
3 and hugged and cried and it was over at that point. I  
4 was fine. And weeks later, the compulsion started to  
5 build again. I felt like a piece of me had become empty  
6 again and the compulsion built again. And I had told my  
7 wife -- I had lied to my wife and told her I had thrown  
8 the gun in the ocean in Hawaii and I that I had to  
9 concoct a story to go back to New York. So, I told her  
10 that I was going to go back and try to find myself and  
11 write a book and she absolutely believed me. She didn't  
12 have any reservations. If she did, she would have told  
13 her sister. She would have told somebody. So, she's  
14 innocent.

15 Q All right. But originally she didn't know your plans?  
16 You didn't share it with her?

17 A I shared it with her from that movie lobby after seeing  
18 that film and then convinced her completely that that  
19 was done and you know, this is going to be a new day.  
20 And of course, that wasn't true.

21 Q All right. And did you have any other business in  
22 New York that, you know, would give you reason to come  
23 here?

24 A That was the business.

25 Q I understand that but your wife, she didn't think, oh,



1       you're in Hawaii and all of a sudden you're going back  
2       to New York, when the last time you were in New York you  
3       shared this horrific plan with her?

4     A    Yes. Well, at that time, in her 20's, she was rather  
5       naive and she believed me. She really did. I think if  
6       she had thought something else she would have said  
7       something, but she believed me. I was very convincing.  
8       As the other Commissioner said, this was very  
9       calculated. Make no mistake about it. Very calculated,  
10       very deceptive and she believed me and I flew to  
11       New York three days prior to the crime and committed the  
12       crime December 8th.

13    Q    And what did she think you were doing while you were in  
14       New York? Did you share on a daily basis what you were  
15       doing?

16    A    I called her once from a hotel room. I told her I was  
17       doing fine, that I missed her. As I said earlier, I  
18       told her that I was going there to try to find myself,  
19       was going to write a book. To me, that was the most  
20       logical reason to deceive her with. I mean, what else  
21       could I say? She believed me.

22    Q    All right. Going back to the COMPAS assessment summary,  
23       you were asked a series of questions?

24    A    Yes, ma'am.

25    Q    On question number 40, do you recall, find people you

1 can trust and you put somewhat difficult?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Okay. But yet, you're going to reside with someone that  
4 you just met as of Monday?

5 A Well, when the question was asked, I'm thinking  
6 strangers. And from everything I've heard about  
7 [REDACTED], [REDACTED], his Christian commitment,  
8 the Christian community, when they're real Christians,  
9 there's a trust there. There's a built-in community  
10 where, especially if someone has heard their sermons,  
11 and as I've said, I've corresponded with him at length,  
12 there would be trust built up. And that was confirmed  
13 on Monday when I met him and he just grabbed me and  
14 hugged me and said, my Mark. He had never even met me  
15 before and he said, my Mark and from then on, we had a  
16 great visit and he told me stories of his life, about  
17 the things that -- the miracles that happened in his  
18 life with the Lord and there was a bond formed. He  
19 said the bond was -- out of his own mouth, he said the  
20 bond was formed in our letters. He said, didn't you  
21 feel it? And I said, yes, sir, I did. So, there's a  
22 difference between asking questions about trusting  
23 people that you don't know anything about, which is kind  
24 of how I took the question, versus people that are of  
25 like faith.

1 Q Okay. And also, question 55 is -- the question is,  
2 learn to avoid saying things to people that you later  
3 regret and you put somewhat difficult.

4 A Yes. Controlling my mouth has been a problem for years.  
5 It's gotten a lot better. The Bible says to be slow to  
6 speak and quick to hear. I try to remember that, but I  
7 have in the past said many things out of this mouth that  
8 I've regretted and learned that, like the Bible says, it  
9 could start a fire, the mouth, the tongue and I try to  
10 watch what I say. What's helped me is being closer to  
11 Christ, because when you're closer to Him, you have more  
12 respect for people that you're talking with and you tend  
13 to say less, you know, harmful things that you don't  
14 have any regret afterwards. You say good things, you  
15 say positive things, you say something that will make  
16 someone's day and that's the difference.

17 Q Along those lines, with anger, you state that --  
18 question asked number 60 was, when I get angry, I say  
19 unkind or hurtful things to people and your response was  
20 mostly agree.

21 A Yes. When I get angry, it doesn't come out of my fist,  
22 doesn't come out with physical violence. It comes out  
23 of the mouth. I'm quick to put somebody down and I'm  
24 working on that.

25 Q Okay. And also, you state, I like to be -- the question

1       asked, I like to be in control in most situations,  
2       mostly agree.

3     A     That's true. What I'm learning lately is, you know, I'm  
4       not in control. God's in control. Look around us. I  
5       mean, we don't know what's going to happen an hour from  
6       now. It's the truth. So, we have to let Him have  
7       control. He sees what's happening an hour from now. We  
8       don't. I'm learning to let Him have the control, let  
9       Him lead me, let Him guide me. It's tough. I'm an  
10      independent -- I've been independent a long time, but  
11      He's showing me, you know, you're going to do better if  
12      you let Me lead you. You're going to meet more people.  
13      You're going to be positive toward them, instead of  
14      negative. You're going to be happier and you're going  
15      to have less stress if you let Me lead your life. So,  
16      that's where I'm in now. It's where I'm going now.

17    Q     So, you're still working towards that?

18    A     Yes, ma'am.

19    Q     One more question that was asked in 63, I prefer to be  
20      the one who is in charge in my relationship with other  
21      people and you put mostly agree. Do you remember that?

22    A     True.

23    Q     So, that's along the lines that you're working on it?

24    A     I still have control issues. I would say more than half  
25      of them are conquered. Some of it's just being older

1 and wiser. Most of it, however, is, as I said, being  
2 closer to Jesus, letting Him -- hey, you know, there's  
3 somebody else there that has a problem. There's  
4 somebody else that needs something. Why don't you be  
5 interested in them? Hold back a little bit on yourself.  
6 I'll take care of you. Think about that person, what  
7 does that person need? So, I try to do it. When I see  
8 somebody, I say to myself, what does that person need?  
9 What are their desires? It's no longer about me  
10 anymore. It's about Jesus helping me to see somebody  
11 else's need and maybe try and help them.

12 Q Okay. All right. Did you feel you were in control when  
13 you committed the instant offense?

14 A Good question. The way I answer that is this: I was  
15 compelled (sic) beyond any reason, totally compelled  
16 (sic) but before this crime -- this is why I pled guilty  
17 to the crime -- I was in control and I had a choice and  
18 I chose wrongly. I had a control switch, whatever you  
19 call it, at that point and I could have turned it  
20 toward, as the other Commissioner said, towards  
21 something positive and I just flipped it to something  
22 negative. So, that's why I'm guilty. It doesn't matter  
23 in this sense what happened that night as far as the  
24 control issue because I could have turned it around  
25 previously. I chose not to. I tried that night to

1 stop. I was praying alternately, God help me, you know,  
2 I don't want to do this. Let's just go back to the  
3 hotel, call, get a plane, get out of here. I have a  
4 wonderful souvenir signed for me. My wife is going to  
5 flip if I show it to her. Let's get out of here, let's  
6 go and it wasn't going to happen. But I did try and it  
7 didn't happen.

8 Q Okay. Thank you very much. Great interview. Is there  
9 anything else that you'd like to say at this point?

10 A Yes. What has changed me now from Mr. Psychopath, who  
11 just cared about himself and didn't care about people's  
12 pain or a wife's pain, meaning Mrs. Lennon, or their  
13 children, which are now grown, what has changed me from  
14 that is I'm not even going to take credit for it. It's  
15 being close to God. The main thing is feeling His love  
16 for me for the first time in maybe the last three years,  
17 finally learning He loves me regardless. Even me,  
18 convicted, condemned murderer, He loves me and what  
19 happens when you feel His love and it's not from a book,  
20 it's not from a seminar tape, when you really experience  
21 His love, what happens is you don't need attention from  
22 people. It helps you love others and think about  
23 others. And that's what's genuinely happened to me.  
24 He's come into my life in a huge way, helped me to not  
25 look inward anymore. He takes care of that. He loves

1 me. I'm loved now. I don't have to look to somebody  
2 for love or attention or negative attention or kill  
3 people or drink because I don't feel self-esteem or be a  
4 bully and hurt people to try to get self-worth going  
5 again. That's why they pick on people. I get that from  
6 God. I get that from Jesus. So when that happens,  
7 everything changes and I'm able now to focus out instead  
8 of inwardly. I'm still working on this, work in  
9 progress here, nothing is perfect, but I feel outwardly  
10 now. I think about somebody else like today on my  
11 visit. I had a visit today. A fellow from Rochester  
12 came to see me out of nowhere and the whole visit was  
13 I'm listening to him, you know, thinking about him,  
14 what's his life like? That's relatively new to me and  
15 it feels great and it's because I feel love for the  
16 first time. I really feel love.

17 Q Was that a friend or someone you knew or?

18 A Well, no. He's visited before years ago, but I haven't  
19 seen him in years.

20 Q Is he a friend of yours?

21 A He's a friend of mine. In fact, today, he offered me a  
22 home and a job. I mean, it's that kind of a friend.

23 Q Okay.

24 A And it just was a great visit but my point was, because  
25 of His love, I'm able to think about somebody else for

1           the first time and it feels really good. That's His  
2           love. It will change you and get you on your feet again  
3           in this world which has finally happened for me.

4 BY COMMISSIONER CRANGLE:

5 Q       Sorry to interrupt. How long have you been at Wende for  
6           now, a few months?

7 A       I came to Wende May 15th.

8 Q       You were in Attica for how long?

9 A       Thirty-one years and a few months.

10 Q      Why did you get transferred?

11 A      That, I do not know. Nobody seems to know.

12 Q      You just -- one day you just woke up and were informed  
13          you're headed out?

14 A      I was on the feed-up line in the kitchen putting food in  
15          trays and the first officer came and said, Mark, you're  
16          on the draft, which means, you know, you're going to be  
17          moved. So, there was a 24-hour period where I was  
18          packing my stuff and getting ready.

19 Q      How are you adjusting at Wende?

20 A      Great. It's a great adjustment. There's good people  
21          here.

22 Q      And prior to meeting this -- your -- well, he's a friend  
23          of yours, but also he's a minister, right, a reverend?

24 A      Yes.

25 Q      In Medina?



- 1 A Yes.
- 2 Q You had a different address with a different person that
- 3 you could live with, correct?
- 4 A That's correct.
- 5 Q And in Corfu, New York or where?
- 6 A Corfu.
- 7 Q Okay. And who -- with whom?
- 8 A His name is [REDACTED].
- 9 Q And how do you know him from?
- 10 A He was my -- initially in the 1980's, he was my
- 11 [REDACTED] and also the [REDACTED]
- 12 [REDACTED]
- 13 Q For what class? What did he counsel you in?
- 14 A Well, he would come down to my cell. At that time, I
- 15 was locked in. I was locked in for the first nine years
- 16 of my --
- 17 Q Oh, okay.
- 18 A So, he would come down and talk to me and tell me a few
- 19 things. He has two master's degrees and he would talk
- 20 to me about life and he told me at that time I had like
- 21 a screen up in front of me, what I know now to be like a
- 22 disassociative situation, which is understandable, but I
- 23 had that nonetheless. He told me I had that and I had
- 24 to get rid of that and I have, with God's help. He
- 25 busted through it, shattered it and I'm able to look at

1       somebody independently of myself and say, you know,  
2       you're a person, you have needs and desires just like  
3       me. So, I meant to tell him that. He visited me  
4       August 1st. I meant to tell him that. I didn't get a  
5       chance to. I have known him very well through the  
6       years.

7       Q     Okay. And going back to how much you're feeling better  
8       in terms of with God and speaking to God, if you were to  
9       be released, what happens if you drift off again?

10      A     Okay. There's always an if, but I honestly feel in my  
11      case, because I have been so cloistered in prison all  
12      these years and my situation is a little different than  
13      the average prisoner, a little rougher maybe in some  
14      ways, a little easier in other ways, but I --

15      Q     We have a lot of offenders that say they found God.

16      A     I understand.

17      Q     With, you know, in cell block --

18      A     But He found me. He found me. That makes the  
19      difference. I didn't reach out to Him to get out of  
20      prison. I was a Christian before I committed my crime,  
21      which is something horrible to say, but it's the truth.  
22      What I meant to say earlier is I've had so many years of  
23      being close to Him, feeling His love, His miracles, He  
24      just performed a miracle for me Friday. You can't  
25      forget things like that and I'm so bonded that I could

1       probably assure you that, if released, I'd probably stay  
2       right where I'm at. You know, once you stand on a rock  
3       for 20 years and feel the waves on you and you don't go  
4       anywhere because you're on a rock, you don't want to  
5       move. I've had a lot of waves coming through my life  
6       and I know how to handle it now. So, why would that  
7       change at 57? If I was 25, I don't think I could answer  
8       that question honestly. But at 57, my wife is still  
9       with me, we're both dedicated Christians. We have a  
10      ministry together that helps a lot of people.

11     Q     What was the miracle --

12     A     That's my life now. That's my life now.

13     Q     What was the --

14     A     My life isn't built around this place.

15     Q     What was the miracle on Friday, if you don't mind me  
16       asking?

17     A     I'd like to tell you that off the record and I'd be glad  
18       to share it with you, but it involves my wife and I and  
19       someone recognized that -- someone in the system  
20       recognized that we needed help and they helped me and  
21       the timing of it and the importance of it, were so great  
22       and I cried for half an hour when I found out and I'd  
23       love to share it with you off the record, if possible.

24     Q     It's okay.

25     A     And I'm still thinking about it. It's -- I'm still full

1 of joy because of it.

2 COMMISSIONER CRANGLE: Okay. All right. Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER THOMPSON: All right. Thank you very  
4 much. We'll have to think about what we'll do in your  
5 case and you'll hear from us in the next couple of days.  
6 Thank you.

7 INMATE: Thank you, ma'am. Thank you,  
8 Commissioners, very much for your time. Thank you for  
9 hearing me.

10 COMMISSIONER COPPOLA: Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER CRANGLE: Take care.

12

13 HEARING CONCLUDED

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## DECISION

3 Denied 24 to 8/14. Despite issuance of an Earned  
4 Eligibility Certificate, parole is denied for the following  
5 reasons: After a careful review of your record and this  
6 interview, it is the determination of this panel that, if  
7 released at this time, there is a reasonable probability that  
8 you would not live and remain at liberty without again  
9 violating the law and your release at this time is  
10 incompatible with the welfare and safety of the community.

11           This decision is based on the following factors: The  
12 instant offense of murder in the second degree, wherein you  
13 shot and killed an innocent victim, an international music  
14 star. Your action clearly demonstrates a callous disregard  
15 for the sanctity of human life. Your record does not show any  
16 prior convictions.

17           The panel notes your prison record, good conduct,  
18   program achievements, educational accomplishments, positive  
19   presentation, remorse, risk and needs assessment, letters of  
20   support, significant opposition to your release and all other  
21   statutory factors were considered. However, parole should not  
22   be granted for good conduct and program completion alone.  
23   Therefore, despite your positive efforts while incarcerated,  
24   your release at this time would greatly undermine respect for  
25   the law and tend to trivialize the tragic loss of life which

1   you caused as a result of this heinous, unprovoked, violent,  
2   cold and calculated crime.

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(All Commissioners concur.)

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